





KEITH ARTHUR MURDOCH, 1886-1952

The passing of a man whose influence was potent in so many aspects of Australian life, leaves a gap that will not easily be filled. To me it seems the end of an era. I would like to think that the ideals Keith Murdoch stood for and the example he set in the field of art will remain the shining beacon lights of a new one.

Throughout the English-speaking countries, he was recognized as a great newspaper man. He was much more than that. He was a great Australian with a truly international mind — a man of deep conviction and fearless opinions, proud of his country and its people and filled with a sense of urgency that Australia must pull its weight to the last man to keep pace with modern thought and hold its place in the eyes of the world.

Others more competent than I can speak of his activities and influence in the many spheres that his fertile imagination touched. I am mainly concerned here with his interest in the arts. He saw us as an isolated people cut off from contact with the stream of cultural tradition in the arts for want of standards of excellence and from art movements abroad. His journalistic training and quick perception made him realize how much our artists and scholars lacked in the stimulus of seeing and feeling these things at first hand; and with characteristic energy and drive, he set out to remedy this state of affairs and was impatient to set the wheels rolling — it was no easy task, but with the sympathetic backing of the more enlightened, and his own Scotch tenacity of purpose, he fought for a cause that has blossomed in our day and will bear fruit in the next generation.

It was my good fortune to know Keith Murdoch intimately over a period of thirty years. As a young man, I purchased for him his first three pictures and like to think this was the beginning of the fine collection he got together in after years. Later when he came to live as a neighbour at Frankston, we saw much of each other — the Saturday or Sunday morning rides and sometimes the evening meal at the farm — cold beef and a bottle of wine. He was a prince of hosts and it was in his house with his family around him that he was seen at his best. It was then and during those morning rides that I got to know and appreciate the inner workings of his mind. He was a shy man and not always communicative, but behind all he thought and said was a deep-felt idealism for his country.

In 1933 Sir Keith was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Gallery and in 1939 succeeded to the Chair, a position he filled with distinction until his death. As Chairman of the Trustees and as their representative on the Felton Bequest Board, no man before has done so much for the Gallery in so short a span of time. He encouraged the younger painters by his practical support and was largely responsible for the importation of exhibitions of English and French Art. Through the "Herald", he was the moving force behind the establishment of the Chair of Fine Arts at the Melbourne University. He was a passionate collector in many fields: pictures, period furniture, silver, glass, rare editions and latterly the exquisite craftsmanship of the early Chinese civilizations claimed his attention. In all these things he developed a rare knowledge and connoisseurship.

He realized the importance of our growing collections, backed by the resources of the Felton Bequest, as one of the great cultural assets of the State, and with vision he looked to the day when a great gallery worthy of its treasures would adorn the entrance to our city. To this end he was largely responsible for earmarking the Wirth's Park Site as a future cultural centre, and with characteristic optimism, hoped to see the building rise in his day. But it was not to be.

As Director of the Gallery, I worked under Keith Murdoch's leadership for thirteen years. No man could have wished for a more understanding and inspiring Chairman, or a wiser counsellor and friend.

DARYL LINDSAY
at Yale University, October 31, 1952.



ART MUSEUM
RECENT
ACQUISITIONS

1.
ARMCHAIR, TEAK WOOD,
Johannes Hansen, Denmark.
Height 29 in. Felton Bequest.

A notable selection of modern furniture, glass, pottery and silver purchased recently in Europe under the terms of the Felton Bequest, is now on display in the Childers Gallery. It provides a welcome reinforcement for the small outpost of modern glass and ceramics which has been on view for some time in the Verdon Gallery.

The Danish chair shown is of teak. Its elegant but unpretentious structure is related to traditional design; the joints of the back-rail show the craftsman's appreciation of high-speed machinery. The seat is leather-covered. Comfortable proportions and finesse in detail, of which the excellent shape of the arm-rests and the slight bow in the front seat-rail are examples, distinguish this piece.

A second Danish chair is of laminated beechwood. The simplicity of its design is made possible by a complex bentwood process rather like that used in making a tennis racket. It is produced by repetition methods.

A trend away from the principles which direct the Scandinavian designers is suggested by the two French sideboards which form part of the display. The cloaking of the structural material by veneer and lacquer, the use of ormolu enrichments and a general form which, although in no way at variance with the function is not actually an expression of it, may represent a challenge to modern orthodoxy.

The most sumptuous of the glass is from Swedish factories. Some pieces are in extremely heavy full-lead crystal of unusual refractive power, some are of thin glass engraved in patterns of a new delicacy, others show a subtle iridescence.

Certain kinds of glass when molten are of such viscosity that very small bubbles do not rise but remain obstinately in fixed position in the fluid. In general glass making these seed bubbles are an extremely troublesome feature and complicated procedures are involved in their complete removal. But the artist-craftsman has availed himself of this property to produce attractive patterns of controlled fine bubbles. The tall Swedish vase shown illustrates this effect.

Scandinavian pottery (5 and 6) relies for its effect on refinement of contour and freshness of colour and design. The English pottery in this consignment is mainly richly textured stoneware with simple decoration. Bernard Leach, who is the maker of the bowl and lid illustrated, says: "The best shape is the one that can live without decoration — if the form content is sufficiently rich and satisfying, then let it be".

Georg Jensen has revived the traditions of the silversmith's craft in Denmark. In an age whose rationalistic taste practically forbids decoration he has shown how machines may be used without forcing silver into designs which hide its nobility. His influence on other Danish silversmiths has been decisive.

French silver, notably represented by that of Jean Puiforcat, is distinctive. Its "raide et ascétique" character is offset only by the generosity of the masses used and the lustre of the finish.

G. THOMSON.

2. POT, W. Staite Murray, England. Height 1 ft. 6½ in.

GREEN DISH, Marc Leroi, France. 1 ft. 6 in. diam.

BOWL WITH LID, Bernard Leach, England. Height 8 in. Felton Bequest.





3.

VASE, height 6½ in.

TALL VASE, height 12½ in.
Mrs. Gunnel Nyman,
Sweden.

BOWL, Daum, France.
Height 7½ in.

Felton Bequest.



4.

TEAPOT,
Hans Hansen, Denmark.
Height 5½ in.

CREAM JUG,
Georg Jensen, Denmark.
Height 3¾ in.

JUG,
Den Permanente, Denmark.
Height 10¾ in.

Felton Bequest.

5.

BOWL WITH LID,
height 8½ in.

VASE, height 3¾ in.
Gustavsberg Pottery,
Sweden.

LARGE BOWL,
Royal Copenhagen
Manufactory.
1 ft. 4½ in. diam.

SMALL BOWL,
Carl Stalhane,
Porcelain Rorstrand.
Width 6⅞ in.

Felton Bequest.



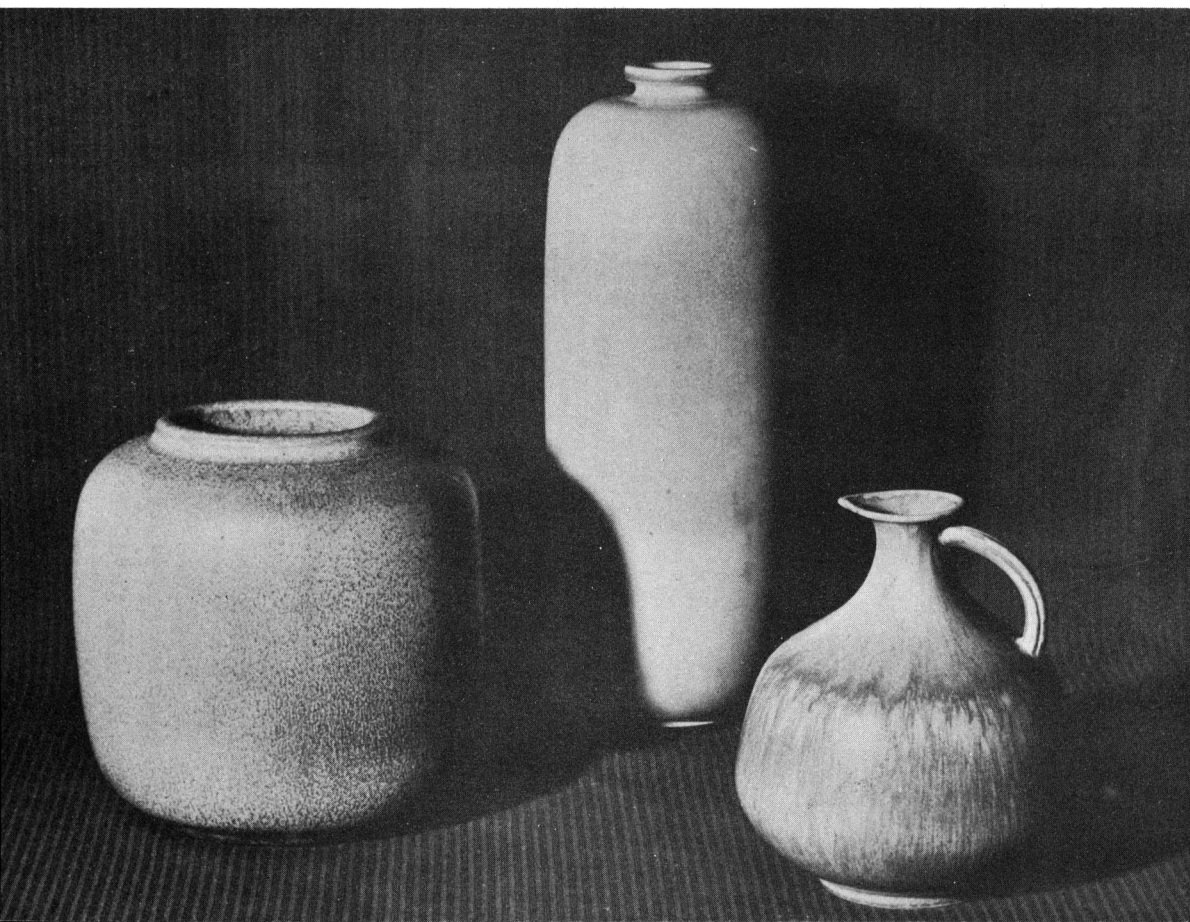
6.

VASE, Solfatara Ware,
Royal Copenhagen
Manufactory.
Height 6⅞ in.

VASE, Gustavsberg Stoneware,
Sweden.
Height 1 ft.

JUG, G. Nylund, Sweden.
Height 6¼ in.

Felton Bequest.



RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE ART GALLERY INCLUDE:

OIL PAINTINGS

Reclining Nude	Henri Matisse	Felton Bequest
Landscape of the Summer Solstice	Paul Nash	Felton Bequest
Nude with Cat	Balthasar K. Balthus	Felton Bequest
Still Life	Justin O'Brien	Purchased
Lyme Regis	Harley Griffith	Purchased
Minos of the Shades	Jean Bellette	Purchased
Houses at Pierrelatte	Elaine Haxton	Purchased

ART MUSEUM

Tapestry	Jean Lurcat	Felton Bequest
A Collection of modern Glass, Pottery, Porcelain, Silver and Furniture from France, Denmark, Spain, Italy and England		Felton Bequest

GENEROUS DONATIONS TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND ART MUSEUM INCLUDE:

Russian Icon, School of Stroganoff	} Presented by Mr. and Mrs. Daryl Lindsay Fan, 19th Century, French	} through the National Gallery Society of Victoria
Two Leather Figures		
St. Catherine, Stone Figure	13th Century, Catalan School	Presented by Mr. Tomas Harris, London

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Supervisor Hector Williamson

Assistant Art Instructor V. Murray Griffin
National Gallery Society June Curtis

The following publications and reproductions are on sale at the Swanston Street entrance:

Catalogue of the Gallery (5/-). Catalogue of Selected Masterpieces with 30 illustrations (1/6). Gallery Guide (1/-). Six large coloured reproductions of the following pictures: Buvelot, Waterpool at Coleraine; Roberts, Shearing the Rams; Lambert, Sergeant of the Light Horse; Cameron, Durham Cathedral; Pissarro, Boulevard Montmartre; Sisley, Hills behind St. Nicaise; Monet, Vetheuil (25/- ea.). A selection of small reproductions of varying sizes including Christmas cards.

Cover design in this issue is a detail from the Tapestry by Jean Lurcat, Aubusson, 6 ft. 6 in. x 18 ft. 7 in. Purchased.